# THE

# Bishop of SALISBURY's

# THANKSGIVING-SERMON

## Before the KING and QUEEN.

PRINTED,

By His Majesty's Special Command.

A

# SERMON

Preached at

WHITE-HALL,

On the 26th of NOVEMB. 1691.

BEING THE

# Thanksgiving-Day

FOR THE

Preservation of the KING,

AND THE

Reduction of IRELAND.

By the Right Reverend Father in God,
*GILBERT* Lord Bishop of SARUM.

*LONDON:*
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A

# SERMON

Preached before the

# KING and QUEEN,

At WHITE-HALL, &c.

PROV. XX. 28.

*Mercy and Truth preſerve the King; and his Throne is upheld by Mercy.*

THERE is no properer nor uſefuller way of praiſing God for the repeated Bleſſings with which he Crowns every Year, and by which he is eſtabliſhing and perfecting that great Deliverance which he wrought for us Three Years ago, than to obſerve the dependance of theſe bleſſings upon the following of thoſe Rules which he himſelf has preſcribed: By this, we are preſerved from the falſe opinion of a partiality of the Divine Providence towards our ſelves or others; or the ſuppoſing that it will ſtill favour us, let us be or do what we pleaſe. And by this we are taught, that we ought not to expect the continuance of God's Favour to us, any longer than we continue true to thoſe Laws and Rules that he has given us. And therefore in *Pſal.* 107. where the bleſſings that God grants to

thoſe who in their extremities call upon him, are ſet forth with much Variety, and in a very Poetical Strain; the Concluſion of all is, *Who is wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the kindneſs of the Lord.* If we are full of the ſenſe of the Goodneſs of God both to our King and to our ſelves, in the preſerving the King's Perſon, and in the maintaining the Throne, which are the two ſubjects of the preſent Thankſgiving; it is fit and proper for this occaſion, to obſerve what may be ſuppoſed to be the conditions upon which ſuch Bleſſings are granted, and upon the continuance in which, we may hope for the continuance and encreaſe of them. Since then *Solomon* was the wiſeſt of Men, as well as of Kings, and that his Wiſdom was, without doubt, chiefly applied to that which was his proper Buſineſs; we may very certainly depend upon his Obſervation, tho' there had not been a ſpecial Inſpiration accompanying it. He, in the Words of my Text, makes the preſervation of Kings, to depend upon their *Mercy* and *Truth*: But he plainly inſinuates, that *Mercy* had in this, the largeſt ſhare; and therefore in the redoubling of the Period, *Mercy* is only named; ſo that the weight and ſtreſs of his obſervation, and by conſequence of this Diſcourſe, muſt lye upon *Mercy*, tho *Truth* and Fidelity muſt likewiſe have its ſhare.

The chief glory of Princes, and the chief of their Titles, tho they ſhould ſwell them up with all the loftineſs of the *Eaſtern* Courts, is, That they are *God's Deputies* and *Vicegerents* here on earth; that they repreſent him, and by conſequence, that they ought to reſemble him. The outward reſpect paid them, carries a proportion to that Character of Divinity which is on them, and that ſuppoſes an imitation of the Divine Perfections in them. Every Man is made after the

*Image*

*Image of God*; and in the right of that, he hath a Dominion over this earth, and all its productions; over all the Beasts of the Field, the Fowls of the Air, the Fishes of the Sea: But as much as men are preferable to all these, so much ought Those who have Dominion over them, to excel all others in this Resemblance. It is a noble Thought in *Plutarch*, That there *are three things for which we adore the Deity, and in which we desire to resemble it; Eternity, Power, and Goodness; for Eternity, we all know we are Mortal, and cannot live for ever; the Elements and Frame of things last much longer; Power is a gift of Fortune, nor is it in it self any great matter; Storms and Thunders have more force, than the most mighty Potentates: But Virtue and Goodness, which lye within all mens reach, are the resemblances of the Supream Being, which make every man shine; and render those that are in Power and Authority, truly Divine.* The famous *Panegerick* has expresst this, not more nobly than truly: *What greater, or usefuller gift can the Divinity bestow upon Mortals, than a Prince that is Virtuous and Holy, and that resembles the Gods themselves?* (Pardon this ill-sounding expression of his Heathenism) *who governs so as to remember, both that he himself is a Man, and that they are also Men over whom he is set; and that considers that his own Innocence is his best Defence, and his surest Guard.* Crowns and Scepters when ill-placed, discover the defects of those whose Minds are not equal to their Fortunes, and make them more conspicuous and sensible: But when those whom they adorn, have the Inward Ornaments of real Worth and Goodness, they give them all possible advantages, and set them in a true Light: For the brightness of Majesty, when not tempered with the softness of Mercy, is like a scorching Sun, who destroys every thing upon which his Beams do

In *Aristide*.

*Plin. in Traj.* Quod enim praestabilius aut pulchrius munus Deorum quam castus & sanctus & diis simillimus Princeps? — qui nec minus hominem se quam hominibus praesse meminit. — fidilissima custodia Principis ipsius Innocentia.

do fall. The ſimpleſt Notions which all men have of God, as well as the diſcoveries which inſpired VVritings gives us of him, repreſent him as a Being, in which *Truth* and *Goodneſs* do dwell in perfection; which are the Attributes that we need the moſt, and to which we truſt chiefly; in which we rejoyce daily; and for which we offer up our moſt ſolemn Adorations. Therefore whatever other Characters of Glory may appear upon Princes, be they ever ſo wiſe and vigilant, ſo brave and generous; let them have all the Arts of Government, all the Oeconomy and Conduct, all the Magnificence and Luſtre poſſible; the vaſteſt Treaſures, the ſtrongeſt Frontiers, and the moſt victorious Armies; yet where *Mercy* and *Truth* are wanting, where they are Perfidious and Cruel, they are rather the Repreſentatives of him that was a *Lyar and a Murderer from the beginning*, than of that God, who is *juſt and true in all his ways, and merciful and gracious towards all his works.* If theſe are wanting, the greater they are in all other reſpects, they are the juſter Reſemblances of thoſe Apoſtate Spirits, *the Princes of the power of the Air*, who have great Dominions, and a vaſt activity, but it is all imployed to miſchief and ruine; and as their Worſhippers in ſome barbarous Nations, reckon that nothing works ſo powerfully for appeaſing their anger, or procuring their favour, as Rivers of Gore; and that they are then beſt pleaſed when their Altars ſwim in humane Blood; ſo tho ſe who delight in Blood, in innocent Blood, and eſpecially in the Blood of their own Subjects, ſhew what is the Original after which they Copy, and the Pattern upon which they form themſelves.

A true

A true picture of the Deity, is a Prince that loves his people, and is tender of them; that renders them safe by his Protection, and happy by his Justice: That is true to his Promises, and careful of his Laws: And that how severe so ever he may be in punishing offences against others, and in maintaining the peace and order of the Community, yet is gentle to offences against himself; except when his care of the Publick obliges him to let the Law take its course: And even then, private revenge is so far from being his motive, that he is forced to do Violence to his own Inclinations, which are always gentle and Compassionate.

A Prince so tempered puts a temptation upon his people, (if they are not under the conduct of a Religion that guides them by surer Lights) to suspect that he is allied to the Divinity it self; and is something of a God in humane appearance: And therefore no wonder if after his death they follow him with Divine adorations. And as this in barbarous Ages gave the rise to almost all the Idolatry of the *Greeks*, so even in more polite times the *Roman* Historian observes, that no man made any shews of mourning and lamentation at *Marcus Aurelius*'s Funeral, *all men holding it for certain, that as he had been lent to the World by the Gods; so he was then gone back to his place again among them.* To us who know better things, this is certain, that a bad King is one of the severest Instances of Gods anger against a Nation: A Plague heavier than either *Famine, Sword, or Pestilence.* For how sensible or afflicting soever these may be, they are no sooner over than all their ill effects go off with them: Whereas a Prince whose ill Example has corrupted a Nation, or whose ill designs have divided and distracted it; leaves behind him a ferment which will be work-

*Jul. Capit. Nemo illum plaugendum censuit: certis omnibus quod a Diis comotus ad Deos Rediisset.*

ing perhaps for ſome Ages after he is aſleep in his Grave: On the other hand a Prince that is Juſt and True, Gracious and Merciful, ſhines with ſo benigne an Influence, that as a good Seaſon, not only gives us warm and healthful Air while it laſts, but does alſo ripen thoſe Fruits of the Earth, upon which we muſt ſubſiſt after it is gone; ſo by his good Government that is duly tempered between Rigorous Severity, and too Indulgent Goodneſs, he not only makes his Subjects happy, during ſo bleſt a Reign, but lays the foundations of a Felicity which will be more laſting than the Princes themſelves, who *tho they are called Gods, yet muſt die like men.* There is no need of the Art and Eloquence of a ſtudied Panegyrick to ſet forth the happineſs of ſuch a Government: It ſpeaks it ſelf, and is well perceived, tho it may neither be decent, nor indeed ſcarce poſſible to ſet it out in words. It argues a defect in the Subject, when Art and Skill muſt be imployed to raiſe it. Pompous figures, big words, and a laboured Method, are falſe Lights, which are only neceſſary for Counterfeits: And as the Arts of Juglars can Impoſe no belief when every one is before hand perſwaded, that their performances are only the ſleights of hand, ſo it is as vain an attempt to perſwade men that they are happy when they know they are not ſo; as it is a needleſs one to enlarge upon that which all men feel better than any one can deſcribe. It becomes this place and this day better to obſerve what God has made the means of preſerving the perſons, and upholding the Throne of our Kings, that ſo by adhearing ſteadily to theſe we may ſecure the bleſſings that we have in hand,

and

and promiſe our ſelves ſuch a Progreſs in them that the next return of a day of this kind, may be to celebrate an entire deliverance from all our Enemies; a Peace abroad as well as we have it now at home, of which the advances made this Year are to us a good pledge, if our Relapſes do not retard and ſet it back.

We ſent away our King with Faſting and Prayer: we ſeemed then all ſenſible how great a hazard every one of us run, in all thoſe dangers to which we knew he would be ready to expoſe himſelf: It is to be hoped that many continued to ſend their moſt earneſt Prayers after him. We wiſhed to hear of action, but we wiſhed and trembled at the ſame time: We knew he was not like thoſe Princes who never fail to take care of themſelves, whatever they may do of their People: and will keep themſelves at a ſure diſtance, when by a very unjuſt diviſion they leave the Danger wholly upon others, while they aſſume the Honour intirely to themſelves. We *trembled*, for as *David*'s men ſaid, not more truly than we might do upon this occaſion, that *his life was worth ten thouſand of us*, ſo we were ſure that danger could have no other effect upon him, but to make him run the deeper into it, till he ſhould break through it: Our *wiſhes* for action, and our *fears* for his perſon were things ſo Interwoven that if Heaven has not granted us that we *wiſhed* for, it was that we might be ſaved from what we *feared*, ſince an entire Victory with that loſs had been our ruine. God has now brought him back to us in ſafety, and with this freſh luſtre on him, that as the Enemy by their extravagant rejoycing laſt year, upon his ſuppoſed death, ſhewed how much they appre-

2 *Sam.* 18. 3.

hended his Life; ſo this year by their conſtant declining of all actions; how much ſoever invited and provoked to it by him, and by the attack that was made juſt after his leaving the Army, ſhewed that they conſidered him as an *Army* alone: Or as the *Soul* that gave Life and Spirit to all the reſt. But they found that he had been ſo long among them and was ſo newly gone from them, that the powerful Influence wrought ſtill in his abſence. We have had many Inſtances, in every Seaſon, and in both Elements how watchful Providence has been about that *Life*, that ſecures all ours, and renders them comfortable and happy to us: had it not been for this, the ſecond *Gun-powder-plot* had proved as fatal as the firſt was intended to be. In defeating the firſt the good nature of the diſcoverer, and the ſagacity of the Prince had their ſhare, but here Providence interpoſed without an Inſtrument: The train was fired and had its firſt effect, but the inviſible direction appeared in that Critical Minute next to a Miracle, the diſmal Treachery was defeated, and the Traytors were diſcovered. Can we but open our thoughts a little to meaſure all the terrible effects of one dreadful moment, the deſtruction of a great part of the Army, and but too probably the loſs of that ſacred Life, which if it had eſcaped the firſt Violence of the fire, muſt have periſhed in the fatal train of Conſequences that would have followed upon it: Who is ſo fond of life as to deſire to have outlived the fate of Religion, of *England*, and of *Europe*; with which that black night ſeemed big; after that darkneſs who would have deſired to have enjoyed the light any more; or to have beheld thoſe Scenes of horrour and ſpectacles of miſery that muſt have followed, and have ſeen

*Europe*

*Europe* divided between its *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* devourers. But that a train ſo dextrouſly laid, and ſo ſucceſsful in its firſt Operations, ſhould have no farther effect but to ſhew at once both the greatneſs of the danger, and the yet greater care of Heaven, to teach more precaution, and to diſcover the blackneſs of our Enemies looks, as if evey Year were to produce a new and unlookt for wonder; and that the Cannon-Ball upon the *Boyne*, and the Bombs upon the *Eure*, are inſtances vying one with another, both in the nearneſs of the danger, and in the greater nearneſs of that favour which compaſſes the King about as with a Shield: Such an extraordinary preſervation may juſtly ſwallow up ones thoughts ſo entirely, that other things may be forgot by the tranſport it raiſes. Yet upon due recollection tho' this is enough to fill us with deep acknowledgments; we have another Scene of wonders before us.

Our Neighbouring Iſland had been long in a moſt terrible Convulſion, the Seat of War and Rapine: the Fire and the Sword, had gone over the breadth and the length of it, and had turned it to a heap of Ruines and Aſhes. The Inhabitants reduced on the ſudden, from a full Plenty, to the Extremities of Miſery; multitudes of all Ranks and Ages, and of both Sexes, were forced to fly hither, and ſink under the heavy Load of Want. It is true, they found Relief both from the Royal Bounty, and the Charity of this Nation: but after all, as *Charity* is a Word of hard digeſtion to a generous Mind, ſo their Numbers made, that every ones ſhare muſt be ſmall where ſo many wanted. Our Enemy had created to us a vaſt diſtraction on that ſide, which ſupported the Spirits and Hopes of our

ſecret, and perhaps, our moſt malicious Enemies here at home. The ſlow motions at the beginning of the Summer, together with ſome other accidents, made all people apprehend that the miſeries of that Kingdom were like to lie upon it yet one year longer. But the unexampled Courage of our Army, and the great Zeal and Fidelity of thoſe that commanded it, broke through all Obſtacles; in a ſeries of Actions, every one of which will paſs down to Poſterity among the Wonders of Military Valour, and the Prodigies of Gallantry and Succeſs; and, in concluſion, when relief was ſo near, when they were preſſed with no neceſſities, but thoſe which their own fears or diſorders threw them into, ſo that there was all poſſible reaſon to fear another cruel Winter, as well as a fourth bloody Summer; That Kingdom is intirely reduced, and in that, the Civil War is at an end, and our Kings are poſſeſſed of the Love and Duty, or at leaſt, of the fear and dread of all their Subjects.

Here we have all that can work, either on our Compaſſion for our Brethren, or our care of our ſelves to raiſe and fill our Hearts with Joy and Gladneſs. Our miſerable Brethren, who for a great while never lay down without looking for a dreadful Alarm of flames about them, or of Enemies no leſs mercileſs than theſe, and, next to the fury of their cruel Enemies, were moſt affraid of ſome of their unruly Friends; they do now lie down and ſleep in Peace, and are ſetting about the Cultivating of their waſted Fields, and the Re-building their ruinated Cities. We are delivered from the Danger, as well as the charge of that devouring War, and being now quiet at home, we are more at leiſure, and in a better capacity to look

look abroad into the World, and to re-aſſume that which is the true Honour, as well as the Intereſt of this Government, (how much and how fatally ſoever it may have been, not only neglected, but betrayed for almoſt a whole Age;) of adjuſting the Scales, and maintaining the Ballance of *Europe*.

Theſe are ſuch ſignal Bleſſings, that it may ſeem a diminution of them, to bring leſſer matters into the Account, which yet deſerve well to be remembred: Every one of them carries ſhining Characters upon it of Gods care of us, and his goodneſs to us. All that related either to our ſelves, or our Allies, has been viſibly under that Protection; our concerns have been every where ſafe, and in many places Glorious and Triumphant. Our Enemies have failed in their Undertakings, and moſt of ours have ſucceeded: Our Wealth and Trade has been preſerved, and our Fleets have returned with this Glory, That no Enemy durſt look upon them. We are now in Peace and Safety, in Plenty and Abundance: and let us look abroad, and ſee if there is any Nation under Heaven that has half the Bleſſings to anſwer for that we have. Thus it is plain, that our King has been wonderfully *preſerved*, and his Throne no leſs wonderfully *upheld*.

Our next enquiry muſt be, what ſhare *Mercy* and *Truth*, but more eminently *Mercy*, may have in this. *Mercy* is that Divine temper that makes us both pity the miſerable, and forgive the injurious; the former of theſe is more Univerſal and Natural to Mankind, the ſecond is more Heroical and Divine, it works in oppoſition to the ſenſe of Injuries, and the reſentment which ariſes out of that, which if not check'd by better

better thoughts, and a nobleneſs of Soul, raiſes a ferment that works ſtrongly in ungoverned Nature.

The elevation of Princes, as it raiſes them above the common miſeries of Mankind, ſo it very often makes them Inſenſible of thoſe Calamities which their Subjects ſuffer often by their means; they are ſo accuſtomed to be flattered by others, that by degrees they come to flatter themſelves, as if they ought to take no ſhare in other mens troubles. But as the Divine Goodneſs extends to all, and *his tender mercies are over all his Works*; ſo Princes that pity the miſerable, and provide for them, that give both acceſs and redreſs to their Complaints, that protect them by their Juſtice, and relieve them by their Mercy, and that with the *Roman* Emperour, reckon that *day loſt*, in which no occaſion has been given them of doing good, of making a ſad Heart glad, and a miſerable Family eaſie; Such Princes, I ſay, by imitating the Supream Being in one of its faireſt and lovelieſt Perfections, come under its particular care. They have alſo inſtead of other Taxes, the Praiſes and Prayers of great multitudes aſcending up continually as Incenſe before God: Theſe according to *Daniels* Advice to a very bad King, are a *redeeming their Iniquities*, and do procure a *lengthning of their Tranquillity*: And if they could have ſuch effects in favour of an Idolatrous Tyrant, what may PRINCES that are Good and Religious expect from them? What may they not expect from them? They by ſuch Acts of Mercy, procure to themſelves many Affectionate and Zealous Subjects, even thoſe

4 Dan. 27.

those who do not need this Instance of their Mercy, yet must love them for it; they know they may need it, so they have that reserve for misfortune. In a word, this forces the love of Mankind, and draws down the favour of Heaven: yet, after all, a good and generous Nature finds no difficulty in such Acts of Mercy. Treasure is not much exhausted by them, and the true pleasure that they give a noble Mind, seems to be Reward enough: Therefore we must next look to Acts of Mercy of another sort, where Nature is more heated, and has a bias another way. *Mercy* to the Injurious is certainly the harder Performance: Where the Dignity of the Person exalts one to so high a Sublimity, the Insolence of an Injury gives a particular sharpness, which is heightned if done with scorn, and delivered in opprobrious words; if there is black Ingratitude as well as deliberate Malice in it; if there is a Venom in the spite that makes it both restless and poisonous; and if it has ill Effects at present, and may probably have worse afterwards. When all these concur in Offences against Princes, it must be acknowledged, that Acts of Mercy, done after such Provocations, carry so very near a resemblance to that infinite Goodness, *which is kind to the unthankful and the evil*: That, all things considered, Mortals can scarce rise up to a higher pitch of Conformity, *David* found in himself, that if *an Enemy had reproached him, he could have born it; but it was his equal*, (one whom he had made so by his Friendship) *his guide, and his acquaintance*: And this was too hard for him, his Heart burnt within him: and he broke out into such Complaints and Wishes upon it, that it is not easie to know how to explain or justifie them.

Luke 6. 35.

Psalm 55. 12, 13.

It is a Conſideration apt to beget Rage even in the mildeſt Breaſts, of thoſe againſt whom the Injury does not work immediately, to ſee a ſort of Men who live ſafe under the juſteſt and gentleſt of all Governments, go about with a reſtleſs Fury, endeavouring to overturn it, to corrupt the Minds of the Nation, and to debauch them from the Duty and Gratitude that they owe to Princes, who ſeem born for the Good of Mankind, for the Protection of Religion, and for raiſing the Honour of the Nation, that was ſinking into ſuch a ſhameful degeneracy, that a mighty Influence and great Examples were neceſſary to reſtore us to that from which we had fallen. If theſe were only the Practices of thoſe of a different Religion, we might the better bear them, becauſe we could expect no other from them: But the Reproach is more ſenſible, as well as the Danger is greater, from *falſe Brethren*, who like the Men of *Smyrna* that called themſelves *Jews*, *but were not, and were of the Synagogue of Satan*, may call themſelves Engliſh Men and Proteſtants, but are of the *Synagogue* of the great *Enemy* (for that is the ſignification of the word *Satan*) of our Nation, of our Religion, and of Mankind. They ſeem to have perſuaded themſelves, and ſtudy to perſuade all others, that what we may have heard of his Cruelty, are only Tragical Stories aggravated far above the Truth; that we need fear nothing, though we ſhould fall under the heavieſt of all Plagues, even his Tyranny; but might be ſafe and happy under his Protection, and in his Friendſhip: and tho' the beſt Soils of *Europe*, even thoſe of his own Religion, no ſooner become a prey to him than they are immediately Fields of Blood and Bones, and Scenes of Horrour and Cruelty; yet

Rev. 2. 9.

we

we have an unnatural Race among us, that are ſo far in love with him, that even this diſmal Proſpect cannot cure it. It cannot be denied, but that in all this, there is great and juſt ground of Provocation: But thoſe who are called up to the higher Regions of humane Nature, the Elevation of whoſe Souls is proportioned to that of their Condition, as they have a greater compaſs in their Proſpect, ſo they have another pitch of ſublimity in their Minds. They know that *Mercy* does then ſhew its utmoſt force, when it is the moſt provoked. Natures ſtampt upon with the Divine Image, feel more Pleaſure in Pardoning than the moſt ſpiteful can do in Revenging Injuries. The Intereſt they have in their People makes them reckon it a real Diminution of their own Strength; when any Member of the Body is cut off, they feel the force of a generous Action upon themſelves, as they ſcorn the terrours of dreadful things, and are apt to make ſuch Experiments upon others, to ſee how far the Ingenuity of Mankind can be wrought on; and their Courage makes them deſpiſe Danger from a forgiven Enemy. For though the trial ſucceeded ill with *Cæſar*, yet they do highly eſteem that great Saying of his, *That it was better once to die, than to live always in fear.* The Princes whoſe Names ſhine the brighteſt in Hiſtory, are thoſe whoſe Clemency ſhewed it ſelf, in the greateſt Inſtances, and after the higheſt Provocations.

*Saul*, while under the Influence of the Divine Spirit, and of that *new Heart* that was given him at his Exaltation, how much ſoever he degenerated afterwards, when he forſook that Conduct, and was forſaken by it, ſet a noble Pattern in his firſt Advancement, which is remarkable in all its Circumſtances. He was told by the 1 Sam. 10. 9, 10.

1 Sam. 10. 1. Prophet *Samuel*, that God had deſigned him to be King of *Iſrael*, and he felt the earneſt of that in a Prophetical Spirit that reſted on him. Soon after, the whole Nation fell into a great fermentation, and a hot canvaſſing for the Crown: He who knew where all muſt end, yet would not make one ſtep towards it; he did not go about to manage Intrigues and render himſelf Popular, but withdrew and ſhut himſelf up all the while: at laſt the matter was put to a deciſion by Lots, and the Lot fell on him. He did not upon that ruſh out with any unbecoming Joy, but ſtaid till he was addreſſed to for it. Then he was receiv'd and proclaim'd King. Immediately upon that he went into the Country, probably without any great affectations of Pomp or State: He conſidering his new Dignity as a Truſt from God, a Tie to his People, and an Authority veſted in him, not to make himſelf look Big, but to make his People truly Great and really Happy: They whoſe *heart God touched followed him*: They diſtinguiſht aright between the Forms of Majeſty, and that true Sublimity of Mind, which makes Kings great in themſelves. But the *men of Belial* who could not bear the Yoke, nor be kept within the bounds of Law and Juſtice, who had a Notion of a King, as a Creature of Pomp and Pageantry, of Vice and Luxury, and of Pride and Inſolence; that ſhould have authorized Rapine and have diſſolved Law; and who knew well that they would make a Figure about ſuch a Prince, and were the only proper Inſtruments that he could Imploy; now when they ſaw a new Scene, and a Court that could not be for them, they reſolved they would not be for it: They ſaid, *How ſhall this Man ſave us? and they brought him no Preſents.* In that

Chap. 10. 24, 26.

Verſe 27.

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Infancy of Kingſhip among the *Jews*, the Crown had no other Revenue, but the free gift of the People: Not given in a Body, for every one brought his Benevolence apart. And then ſome of thoſe ungovernable Men, who perhaps had been among the firſt and hotteſt of thoſe who deſired a King, when they had one, intended to keep him low, and not to furniſh him with that which was neceſſary to ſupport the Government. Upon all this *Saul held his peace*; he not only overcame, but quite ſuppreſt his Reſentments: And tho' he reſolved that his Mercy ſhould triumph over their Perverſeneſs, yet he ſtaid till he might do that with advantage: Some perhaps imputed his *ſilence* to coldneſs and inſenſibility, others to a ſenſe of his Feebleneſs, but no doubt they thought that he laid up all in his Mind, and reſolved to take ſevere Revenges as ſoon as he durſt adventure on it: but very few could imagine that he reſolved to connive at all, till ſome great occaſion ſhould be offered him to ſhew his Care of his People, and his Zeal for the Publick; after which, he might with a better grace extend his Clemency to thoſe who deſerved it ſo little: This was ſo great a thought, that few could ſuſpect it, becauſe few were capable of it. But a Prince, whoſe Soul is raiſed to a level with his Fortunes, has a nobler ſence of things, far above the fretful peeviſhneſs of little and angry Minds. A remarkable Occaſion gave *Saul* the advantage, that he looked for. *Nahaſh* King of *Ammon*, a Cruel and an Idolatrous Tyrant, puſhed on with a deſire of *Glory*, and of enlarging his Frontier, did, againſt the Faith of Treaties, invade the Country, and beſiege *Jabeſh Gilead*: the poor Inhabitants, ſtruck with Terrour, offered to Capi- 1 Sam. 11. 1.

Capitulate; he who was ſincere, though brutal, not like thoſe who offer any Conditions, that they may be once poſſeſſed of a Place, though they do not intend to obſerve them, told them he muſt make ſure of them; and ſince the way of War in thoſe Days was chiefly in *Archery*, in which nothing can be done without the direction of the right-Eye, he told them he muſt *thruſt out all their right-Eyes.* To this Condition, hard as it was, the Beſieged agreed, if they ſhould not be relieved within ſeven Days: They gave notice of their Extremities to their Country-men on the other ſide of the Water; who upon that *wept*, they broke out into feeble Mournings and Complaints. *Saul* was then looking after his Cattel, and perhaps ſome thought him capable of no higher Cares: But upon the News, he gathered together as great an Army as was poſſible on the ſudden, and in great Marches came to *Jabeſh* in time; and did ſo entirely defeat the *Ammonites*, *that two of them were not left together:* And then it appeared, that *Saul*, for all his *coldneſs* and *ſilence*, had all the Flame in him that became his great Poſt, and that urgent Occaſion. Upon this, the Men of *Belial* looked a little out of Countenance, and began to be afraid for themſelves; if the People had ſeen them, probably they would not have ſtay'd for the Forms of Juſtice, but in the firſt Rages of their Fur, have taken the ſhorter way, and have run upon them without Order. The Body of the Nation full of Reſentment, move *Samuel*, that a ſearch might be made for thoſe that had ſaid, *Shall Saul Reign over us? that they might be brought out, and then they would put them to death*; They would eaſe their King both of the trouble of Proſecuting, and of the reproach of a ſevere Execu-

Verſe 12.

tion;

tion; they would both Impeach and Execute. But the hitherto well kept *ſilence*, was now broke through: *Saul* would not be ſo much as Paſſive, when ſo much Blood was in danger to be ſhed; and ſince his People had not Temper and Union enough to ſue to him for an *Indemnity*; he prevents the Applications of the Guilty, and the Interceſſion of their Friends, by an *Act of Grace*, pronounced in theſe words, *There ſhall not a man be put to death this day, for to day the Lord hath wrought Salvation in Iſrael:* V. 13. *Samuel* ſaw well how this muſt needs end, and that ſo Eminent an Act of Mercy, would both ſettle and uphold his Throne; therefore he diverts the People from their zealous, but ill-governed heat; and directs them to go to *Gilgal*, the Place of their Publick Aſſemblies, and to *renew the Kingdom there*; V. 14. which was done with that Solemnity, that both *Saul and all the men of Iſrael rejoyced greatly*: Upon all this, I ſhall make no other remark, but that *the thing which hath been, is that which ſhall be, and there is no new thing under the Sun.*

Another Eminent Act of Mercy meets us in *David's* 2 Sam. 19. 22. Story; who when he was in one of the loweſt Ebbs of Fortune, was affronted by *Shimei*, who followed him with the Inſolence of flinging Stones, as well as Curſes at him; but neither at that time, when the freſhneſs, as well as the unuſualneſs of the Injury, might have juſtified the utmoſt rigour, nor afterwards upon his Re-eſtabliſhment on the Throne, would he give way to the demands of Juſtice againſt him. He bore the Injury decently at firſt, and forgave it graciouſly at laſt. The reaſon that he gave for it, agrees with the Maxims in my Text, *Do not I know that I am this day King over Iſrael?* There was no

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need of Acts of Severity to bring him to the Throne, but of Acts of *Mercy* to *uphold him in it*; and therefore he reckons those that called for Justice in so unseasonable a time, *his Adversaries.*

*Augustus* began his Reign with great Severities, which were extorted from him by *Mark Anthony*; who, no doubt, had often prest *Cæsar*, tho' in vain, to the same Courses, and could not fail to persuade the *Nephew* from his *Uncle*'s Fate, that there was but one sure way to be safe from his Enemies. Such Counsels well became a Creature of Vice and Pleasure; who, intending to abandon himself to his Luxury, knew he could not be secure as long as so many brave *Romans* were left alive. But as soon as *Augustus* got out of his Conduct, he shewed how well he deserved Power, that could use it as he did. A remarkable Instance of this is related by *Seneca*. *Cinna* that was descended from the Great *Pompey*, as well as from the Famous *Roman*, whose Name he carried, conspired against him, after he had received large Accessions both of Wealth and Honour from him, and was in high Favour with him. All was discovered, and in the first emotions of Anger, *Augustus* resolved on extreme Severities. His *Friends* were brought together to consult about it, for he honoured some of his Court with that familiar Title; but his Heart, nobler than theirs, turned him to softer Counsels. He broke out into those memorable words, *Life is not worth all this, that it should be preserved by the destruction of so many Persons.* He communicated the matter to the Empress *Livia*, who was upon that occasion more governed by the Tenderness, than the Fearfulness of her Sex: She told him *he had tryed Severity enough*, and that therefore he

*Non est tanti Vita, ut si ego non pertam tam multi perdendi sunt.*

he had beſt do, as Phyſicians, who when one ſort of Medicines do not ſucceed, change their Courſe, and try another: This Advice ſuiting with his own Inclinations, prevailed. So he ſent for *Cinna*, and in a Converſation of two Hours, he ſet before him the Kindneſs he had ſhewed him, and the Baſeneſs and Blackneſs of his Crime, the Folly as well as the Ingratitude of it, in ſuch terms, that after he had almoſt killed him with his Diſcourſe, which he drew out to the greater length, that being all the Puniſhment to which he had condemned him; he revived him, in concluſion, with ſo entire a Pardon, that he kept him ſtill about him, and found him ever after that both faithful and affectionate. And thus he not only gained him, but all the Romans likewiſe, who were forced to confeſs, that he deſerved to govern the whole World, who had learned to govern his own Paſſions and Reſentments. Upon this *Seneca* obſerves truly, That *Princes become ſafeſt by their Gentleneſs; that Severities may perhaps chaſtiſe the Inſolence of a few, but they provoke Mankind, and make that Hatred become general, which was before particular only to a few: And that for rendring Princes univerſally amiable, it muſt appear, that their* Mercy *flows from the want of Will to puniſh, and not from the want of Provocation.*

*Lib. de Clem.* Regibus certior eſt, ex manſuetudine ſecuritas: quia frequens vindicta paucorum odium reprimit, omnium irritat. Voluntas oportet ante ſæviendi quam cauſa deficiat.

It is hard to ſet forth any of the Vertues that become Princes, without ſome memorable Inſtance out of the Life of *Marcus Aurelius*, whom all Writers repreſent as the compleateſt Pattern of a perfect Prince. In his time *Avidius Caſſius* aſſum'd the Empire; probably diſpleaſed with the Vices of the Emperour's Brother, whom he had made his Partner of the Empire: tho he found it more eaſy to give him a ſhare of his Throne than of his Vertues. *Caſſius* was a Man of great Pro-

bity, and highly esteemed by *Marcus Aurelius* upon that account. His Brother wrote him a vehement Letter, setting forth the Danger of this Revolt, and how fatal it might prove to himself and his Children, if not check'd in time: and to sharpen him the more, he said, *that* Cassius *called himself a vitious Fool, and him a learned Fool.* For the truth was, *Cassius* had publickly complained, that tho *Marcus* himself was a good Man, that led an exemplary Life, yet he gave way to the Vices of others, and did not imploy his Authority enough to repress them: which is the single Blemish that lies on his Memory. *Marcus* answer'd his Brother's Letter very coldly, he said it was writ in too earnest and too anxious a Stile; neither suitable to his Brother's Dignity, nor to his own Times. Upon the Head of his Children he writ, *May my Children perish, if* Avidius *deserves the Love of his Country more than they; or if it is the Interest of the Commonwealth that he live rather than they.* The Love of *Marcus* was indeed every-where so great, that *Cassius* had no other way to work against it, but to give out that he was dead. At last, *Cassius* was forsaken, and killed: upon that *Faustina* the Empress writ most vehemently to the Emperour, pressing him to order a severe Inquiry after all the Complices of the Revolt, that so he might secure himself and his Family. To this he answered, that she writ as became her, to be concerned for him and his Children; but he would do what became him, he would pardon all *Cassius*'s Friends, and write to the Senate to proceed gently in that Matter. *Nothing became a Roman Emperour better than Clemency. As for her apprehensions of Danger, she might depend upon it, that God would protect him, and have regard to his Piety.* He writ also to the Senate, and descended to the Language of *praying them*

Liberi mei pereant, si magis amari meretur Avidius quã illi: & si magis Reipublicæ expediat Cassium vivere quam liberos Marci.

*them moſt earneſtly, that they would do nothing that might rob him of his Piety and Clemency:* That no Man's Life might be taken, but that ſuch as they had already baniſhed might be recalled: he wiſhed he could reſtore Life to thoſe who had been killed on that occaſion; and profeſſed that if *Caſſius* himſelf had fallen into his Hands, he would have only reproached him a little for his Errours, and then have preſerved him: he deſired therefore that no Hurt might be done to any of his Friends or Relations, *but that they might live ſafe, knowing that they lived under* Marcus. And for his Complices, he deſired that no further Enquiry might be made about them, that no Perſon might fall under any diminution of his Fame, or any Hardſhip or Reproach whatſoever upon that account: and concluded all in theſe few, but weighty Words, *Detiſq; hoc meis temporibus*, Grant me this in return to what you enjoy by my Reign: Words that carry an Air of Pride in them, but it is of the nobleſt and beſt ſort; and that could ſcarce have been ſaid by any but him that had a right to ſay them. Theſe are ſhining Paſſages in the Lives of thoſe Princes, that have rendred them famous to all Poſterity, and make them ſtill live freſh and glorious, when the Memory of Tyrants gives Horrour and Deteſtation: For, as the Panegyrick has it, *This is the true and laſting Glory of a Prince; theſe are the Honours that outlive them, which neither length of Time, envious Succeſſors, nor the Flames themſelves can deface.*

Oro atque obſecro ut cenſura veſtra depoſita, meam pietatem clementiamq; ſervetis.

Vivant igitur ſecuri, ſcientes ſub Marco ſe vivere.

Scis enim ubi vera Principis ubi ſempiterna ſit Gloria, ubi ſint honores, in quos nihil flammis, nihil ſenectuti, nihil ſucceſſoribus liceat.

Shine then, *Great Princes*, with your own *Glory*, which makes you look brighter now, than you did in all the Attire of Majeſty at your Coronation: This is a Luſtre that you give your ſelves, and borrow not from Ceremony. Triumph in the Hearts of your

People by your Vertues, and over your Enemies by your *Mercy*: this will cover them with Shame, and you with Honour; and tho it may not be due to them, yet it is due to your ſelves. This ſhews that you were born for Crowns, that you well deſerve thoſe you wear, but that greater ones are reſerved for you: This gives you the Love of your People, which to you will be always inſtead of *Treaſures, Fleets and Armies*: for it will always ſupply you with every thing you need. May the Greatneſs of your own Minds be your conſtant Guides, rather than the Peeviſhneſs of ſpiteful Men, who may, as *Parmenio* did, ſuggeſt what was fit for *Parmenio* to do; but your Royal Hearts will always move you to do what becomes an *Alexander*, or, to ſpeak truer Engliſh, what becomes *WILLIAM* and *MARY*.

Thus I have conſidered how *the King is preſerved, and the Throne is upheld by Mercy*. If this is a ſure Fence, and a good Bottom, we may all conclude that we are very ſafe. This ſpeaks ſo much, that I may may well ſay nothing upon a Head, which is capable of no Cenſure on the one hand, how much ſoever the Narrowneſs of ſome angry and impatient Minds may have blamed the Exceſſes on the other. But little People muſt have low Thoughts; whereas exalted Souls have a compaſs of *Mercy* far beyond their meaſure: and tho it is not to be denied, but that too great an eaſineſs to forgive, may have ſome Miſchiefs attending it; yet happy is the Nation that is under Princes, who may be too good on ſome occaſions, but can be cruel on none: eſpecially, when that flows not from a feeble Eaſineſs, but from true Principles, and a real firmneſs and ſtrength of Mind.

But after all, *Mercy* hath its Bounds: and it is often fit, and ſometimes neceſſary, that thoſe who have long abuſed it, and have preſumed much upon it, ſhould feel the Weight of the Law, and the Burden of their own Crimes: If *Mercy* has its Limits, the next Fence in my Text has none at all. *Truth* does alſo *preſerve the King*, and that does at all times, and upon all Occaſions, bind equally.

*The* Notion of *Truth* is ſo plain, and the Neceſſity of it is ſo viſible, that all Mankind ſeem to agree almoſt equally, both in commending and in neglecting it; all Men claim it from the reſt of Mankind, but almoſt every Man pretends here to a diſpenſing Power for himſelf. The common Notion of *Truth* is an Oppoſition to all manner of Falſhood, Doubleneſs or Deceit: This is the Foundation of all Confidence, and the Cement of all Society; and it is not only the *Honour*, but both the chief *Strength* and the beſt *Treaſure* of Princes: This makes their Subjects depend upon them, and their Allies truſt to them: the Preſſures and the Fears of Men of low Degree, force them ſometimes to *make Lies their Refuge*, they eſcape to it from a preſent Miſchief, which to them is more ſenſible than a laſting Inconvenience, that a Diſcovery which often comes and is always to be feared, will bring upon them. But Princes are exalted far above all thoſe Occaſions that poorer Men may have for a Lie, as long as their Deſigns are noble and good: when theſe grow bad, they muſt indeed betake themſelves to as bad ſhifts, but thoſe will ſoon be found out; and then though their Condition will free them from the Injurioufneſs of a Diſcovery, yet the Inconveniencies of it will hang upon them as long as they live: and therefore *Solomon* reckoned *lying Lips* in a *Prince* one.

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of the greateſt Incongruities that could be thought on. Happy thoſe, who how hard ſoever it may be to have the *Word*, or obtain the *Promiſe* of a *Prince*, yet when they have it, know that they can truſt to it, and depend upon it.

*Truth* ſtands ſometimes for Integrity, in Oppoſition to Corruption and Bribery; this is that to which Princes in their own Perſons are little ſubject, unleſs it be to betray a Confederate, or ſell an Alliance; Accidents that happen but ſeldom: but the beſt Courts and the worthieſt Princes are ſubject to Corruption by Proxy, to have their Favour, and often their Juſtice too, and the Protection and Security of their People, ſet to ſale, and that ſometimes ſo groſly, as if an Auction were proclaimed to him that bids moſt. Men of Vanity, Avarice and Luxury, that deſign both to live profuſely, and to raiſe vaſt Fortunes, cannot compaſs all this with regular Appointments, and fair Purchaſe; but rather than fail in it, they will proſtitute themſelves, and, as much as in them lies, the Honour of the Prince likewiſe: by this means a King ſuffers not only in the Eſteem and Love of his People, but all his Affairs do likewiſe ſuffer ſenſibly, eſpecially in critical Times. No Man thinks ſo much how to ſerve him, as how to rob the Publick; and every one reckons that he owes neither Gratitude nor Duty when he comes in as a Purchaſer: the firſt Duty he thinks is to himſelf and his Family, to recover once what he laid out, that ſo he may live afterwards on clear Gains. One Emperor nailed to the Bench the Skin of a Judg that ſold Juſtice; and another ordered a Favourite to be ſmoaked to Death, for ſelling the Credit he had with him, and ſaid, *It was fit that he ſhould die by Air, who had ſold it:* If this Death was too witty, yet certainly

tainly it was not too ſevere. Corruption is ſo apt to return to Courts, as a Plant that grows in its proper Soil, that many and great Examples will be neceſſary to root it out. Even *Samuel*'s Sons took Bribes, and neither the Vertues of their Father, nor the Fall of *Eli*'s Family, which was ruined for the ſake of two bad Sons, could keep them from Corruption: and ſo indulgent are even good Governours to thoſe they love, that *Samuel*, who had good Reaſon to know how dear *Eli*'s Indulgence to his Sons ſtood him, was yet too remiſs himſelf in looking narrowly to his own Sons, which brought on him that publick Affront, that the People did openly reproach him with it, and for that very Reaſon deſired a Change of Government. This Evil is ſo common and ſo natural to Men of Power, and the Poiſon of it is ſo pernicious, that Princes who deſire to preſerve themſelves and their People, cannot uſe Care enough to watch over it. 1 Sam. 3. 11. 1 Sam. 8. 5.

There is yet a third Senſe in which *Truth* ſtands frequently in Scripture; we find it often both in the *Pſalms* and in this Book, ſignifies true Religion, and not only the Profeſſion, but the Practice of it: Of all Men Princes are thoſe who owe moſt to God; for as he has raiſed them to high Degrees of earthly Glory and Happineſs, ſo he has put it in their Power to do the greateſt Good to Mankind, and to make the World happy both in them and in one another: And as their Zeal for Truth in this higheſt and nobleſt Senſe, is that which gives them the cleareſt Title to the Favour and Bleſſing of God; ſo true and unaffected Piety has a Beauty in it that ſtrikes the greater as well as the better Part of Mankind; even Men that are reſolved to be bad themſelves, are ſorry to ſee their Prince ſo; for they do clearly perceive the ill Effects which that

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may have upon the Community, and that it may end in their own Ruin at laſt: And all conſidering Princes will have many Occaſions to obſerve, that Impiety and Vice are as hurtful to their Affairs, as to the greater, the vaſtly greater Concerns of Religion. What Fidelity or Zeal, what Duty or Affection can be expected from Men, who will be always truer to their Intereſts and Luſts, than to their own Honour, or their Maſters Service? that are Slaves to Pleaſure, and whoſe Spirits are enervated, and their Hours, as well as Fortunes, devoured by Luxury. It is an Obſervation ſo obvious, that none can ſcape it, which gives one much Regret, but yet with it ſome Satisfaction, that our chief Misfortunes are owing to thoſe Vices and Exceſſes, which have not been yet ſeverely enough repreſſed and puniſhed. But as you, *Great Princes*, have begun to ſhew your Diſlike and Hatred at theſe, and not contented to teach your Court and Subjects by your Example, are reſolved to imploy your Authority, in obliging them at leaſt to the Decencies of Vertue and Religion: Go on and proſper in theſe noble Deſigns. What are Conqueſts and Triumphs, the waſting and diſpeopling of Cities and Provinces, which make ſuch a Figure in the falſe Eſtimate of the World, compared to the more real and ſolid Honours of reforming vitious Courts, luxurious Cities, and degenerated Countries? This is ſo hard, and will be ſuch a decried Undertaking, eſpecially by thoſe who need it moſt, and who ought to promote it chiefly, that no ſmall Degree of Courage and Reſolution is neceſſary to ſupport thoſe that ſet about it. Suffer me to repeat to you the Words with which God himſelf animated *Joſhua* on the like occaſion; *Be thou ſtrong and very couragious, that thou mayſt obſerve to do according*

Joſh. 1. 7,8,9.

to

*to all the Law which* Moſes *my Servant commanded thee: Turn not from it to the right Hand or to the left, that thou mayſt proſper whither-ſoever thou goeſt. This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth; but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night; that thou mayſt obſerve to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou ſhalt make thy Way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good Succeſs. Have not I commanded thee? Be ſtrong and of a good Courage, be not afraid, neither be thou diſmayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* Theſe Words were ſaid to *Joſhua*, after he had ſhewed his military Courage upon great Occaſions; and import, that beſides the Magnanimity of affronting Danger, there is a *Courage* in the Mind, neceſſary to repreſs Sin, and to maintain Vertue and Religion, that muſt compleat and perfect the other.

Happy you, that have it in your Power to be ſuch Bleſſings to Mankind! May your Will equal your Power, and may all things bend to your Authority: May it be ever imployed in advancing the Honour of God, and the Kingdom of his dear Son! May your Perſons be ever ſafe under his Protection, and your Government happy under his Influence! And may we at the Concluſion of every Year have freſh matter to rejoice in God, both on your Account and on our own, who hath done great things for you, and for us all, both in you and by you.

And let us all ſtudy that our Thankfulneſs to God, may at leaſt bear ſome Proportion to his Goodneſs to us: Let us pay the Vows that we made to him in our Days of Faſting and Prayer: and as we deſire another happy Year to conclude what is ſo far carried on in this, let us make ſuch a right

Uſe of our preſent Advantages, and ſuch decent Returns for the Bleſſings that we have in hand, as may give us a Title to expect the compleating them in another Seaſon. We are now almoſt in Sight of Land, and the Proſpect is ſo fair, that nothing but our Sins and our Diviſions can ſtop a Courſe of Succeſs and Glory, that is near its laſt and higheſt Point. May no corrupt nor miſguided Humours, no unjuſt Jealouſies nor peeviſh Reſentments, no Faction nor Animoſity in our Councils, retard or defeat thoſe great Deſigns which have been hitherto under ſuch a viſible Conduct and Bleſſing from above. Suffer me to ſum up all in the Words of *Samuel*, upon an occaſion not much unlike this: *Now therefore this is the King and Queen that you have deſired; and behold, the Lord hath ſet them over you; if you will fear the Lord and ſerve him, and obey his Voice, and not rebel againſt the Commandment of the Lord, then ſhall both you and the Kings that reign over you continue following the Lord your God.* And a little after he redoubles the Exhortation: *Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in Truth with all your Heart, for conſider how great things he hath done for you:* May they be compleated! May they be laſting! and may they produce amongſt us, all that for which they are intended! May our Princes ſtill triumph! May their Councils be always wiſe; and their Forces ever proſperous! And may we and our Poſterity after us rejoice long in our Kings! May they live long, and may their Names live for ever; and may all Nations call them bleſſed! May Religion and Vertue prevail and flouriſh, and the Church be eſtabliſhed under them! May they ever *preſerve Mercy and Truth*, that ſo they may be ever *preſerved*, and *their Throne always upheld by them!* May Juſtice and Righteouſneſs ever flow from them,

1 Sam. 12, 13, 14, 24.

them, and ſuch an Abundance of Peace, as may make us both ſafe and rich, great and happy under their Protection: ſo that both we and all round about us, when we reflect on the 88 of this Age, may almoſt forget the 88 of the former, and that our ſecond *5th* of *November* may wear out the Remembrance of the *1ſt*. And to conclude all, for I can riſe no higher; May the *Happy* and *Glorious* Days of Queen *Elizabeth* be darkned and eclipſed by the more *Happy* and more *Glorious* Reign of KING *WILLIAM* and QUEEN *MARY*.

*FINIS.*

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